



Working Happy from Home

Tips from work-from-home veterans

What's it take to be both happy and productive while working virtually?

We polled our team of work-from-home veterans. Here are their tips.

Set up a dedicated work space. Make an inviting space for work—rather than trying to do so from the kitchen or a card table—to help tell your brain when it's time to focus. This also alerts your family that you are in “work mode” and not to be bothered. Add elements like plants or soft music that help you feel “treated” when you're in your work space.

Use time that used to be filled with commuting to accomplish something important. Replace this time with something you value that you didn't have time to do before (a favorite hobby, daily quality time with your kids, etc.). Reminding yourself what you're gaining by working from home alleviates the woes of what you could be missing in an office.

Establish and maintain set work hours. For some it can be easy to slip out of work mode when distractions are all around you. Others find it hard to turn work off when it is always accessible. Align the times of day when you're most productive with your work hours and stick to them. Turn off your gadgets or leave them in another room during non-work hours.

Take breaks and reserve time to move. Schedule a break for exercise just like you schedule any priorities in your day. Moving creates better focus and ignites your creativity. A 10-minute walk or 5 minutes to unload the dishwasher can also help you recharge. Breaks from the computer are also vital for your eyesight; make sure to build them into your day.

Create norms that help alert your family. Find ways to show your family (and your brain) when you are working and shouldn't be bothered. Hang a “do not disturb” sign on the office door, put on a necktie with your sweats, or place a blanket on your chair as a visual cue to your family to leave you alone.

Stay organized. You're now your own office cleaning crew, so establish a set time in the week for cleaning and use that time to file and pitch what you don't need. Keep both your physical and electronic work materials separate from your personal stuff.

Make a priority to connect with coworkers. Consider an electronic channel just for connecting around watercooler chatter. Chat a little with close coworkers each day about life and how it's going. Don't forget the power of an old-fashioned phone call. We are wired for human connection and need to find ways to create it even when we're remote.

Videoconference! There is definitely something about seeing faces when you talk to people. Zoom, Teams, or FaceTime are great tools for this. Make it a norm to use videoconference at least some of the time when talking to your coworkers and team.



Strive for professionalism but **remember to give each other grace.**

Inevitably, there will be dogs barking or babies crying on teleconferences. You won't always have your hair and makeup done for a pop-up video call. Give yourself and your coworkers some grace and laugh. **This is a new way to work and you're learning together.**

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